P@X Online Bulletin Peace Studies Group

Center for Social Studies – School of Economics – University of Coimbra

March 2004 **-** N°1

Editorial

This is the first number of **P@x**, the online bulletin of the Peace Studies Group of the Centre for Social Studies.

The dissemination of knowledge on the peaceful transformation and resolution of conflicts and on the strategies of peace promotion and consolidation represents an unquestionable task for those who conceive the peace field as a place that assembles the critical readings of international reality, combining academic research with citizen intervention.

P@x will be an expression of that approach. That is why it will present four main features.

First, a *cosmopolitan perspective*. We assume the need to consolidate knowledge on international conflictive dynamics and peace initiatives as an imperative in Portugal, bringing it closer to policy-makers, opinion-makers and social movements. Media treatment, made of flashes and sound bytes, places us as *voyeurs* of foreign dramas but keeps them distant and mysterious. The opacity of most of the war and peace processes can only be fought with further and enhanced knowledge.

Second, a *normative look*. We do not intend to study conflicts only to become familiar with them, but rather to transform them. We are not guided by the arrogance of dictating objective laws to interpret, once and for all, the outbreak of conflicts or the windows of peace. What we do want is to work and study to cause a change, and to change in order to give peace primacy over violence.

The third feature is a *multidimensional approach*. There are multiple violences (direct, structural, cultural). And each violence has its own peaceful correspondent. The interdisciplinary dialogue is a crucial instrument of an ambitious peace. Because, in fact, it is ambition we're dealing with: to oppose the solidity of a dense and sustainable peace to the frothy days of conflituality.

Finally, a *pedagogical aim*. To educate for peace is above all, to educate for conflicts. Conflituality is a good in itself without which the risk of stagnation is unbearably great. However, we must acquire and train skills to combine conflict appreciation with its non-violent transformation.

This is our horizon. This is what P@x is going to be about!

José Manuel Pureza

P@X Theory

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO PEACE STUDIES:
ONE CONSISTENCY AND THREE INNOVATIONS

The peace studies school is one of the noble lineages of the contemporary political thought, recognized by its critical and committed approach.

Peace studies emerged in the field of International Relations as a challenging proposal to the canon established in this disciplinary field by Realism. Through the founding fathers of Realism, International Relations became a discourse that legitimised the insatiable quest for power and the use of violence and war as 'normal' instruments of interstate affairs. The centrality of each State's national interest (of the most powerful naturally…) and the competitive reasoning were accepted as pillars of a scientific discourse on international affairs. Peace studies opposed an approach for the future to this conservative and retrospective scenario (History as the only source of objective laws). It is a different future, and not an eternal present, which is at the heart of peace studies. Hence, its focus on action: studies *for* peace rather than studies *on* peace, meaning that peace studies are presided by a clearly normative and innovative outlook. Its discourse distinguishes objectivity from neutrality and understands itself as a tool to transform reality, rather than to understand it in a passive way. Peace is the *leitmotiv* of this change. A wide and plural peace, a long-term endeavour as an alternative not only to direct physical violence but also to structural and cultural violences.

Being developed since the sixties, this approach of international relations faces a new reality nowadays. In the early XXI century, there are three main challenges to tackle.

First, *regulated peace*. After the precedents of Kosovo and most of all Iraq, peace became more and more articulated with the need to strengthen the regulatory powers of multilateral international institutions. Procedures became substance.

In the name of references that owe a great deal to peace studies – human security, complex political emergencies, failed states – the world powers are giving an increasingly new strength to war or unilateral intervention, shattering the universal contract of collective security consecrated in the United Nations Charter. A knowledge committed to peace must face this unregulated trend as its key challenge.

O The second defy is *to unveil silenced voices*. The dominant understandings on peace and conflicts have ignored the perceptions of dominated groups, such as women, minorities, indigenous peoples or traditional and communitarian authorities. Within academics, the media and the common sense, a discourse on war, as well as a discourse on peace, have been canonised without consideration of the world system's subaltern actors. It is important to learn with the anonymous and ignored experiences of these actors and to continuously give newness to the paths of the peaceful solution of conflicts.

The last challenge is *pluralism*. The specific ways to transform conflicts in a non-violent way are not standardised *a priori*. But there appears to be a huge temptation to do so. Models and methodologies 'ready to use' that are disseminated through the 'conflicts' market' blossom from the main international think tanks. There is today a stabilised pharmacopoeia of peace building formulas served at the negotiations table as if it was fast food: without distinction, reduced to dust, in charming packages and de-vitaminised. However, today's conflicts require a strong and demanding peace, rooted in the particular conditions of each place and each culture.

It is up to universities, research centres and the media to find together creative answers to these challenges.

José Manuel Pureza

P@X Peace Observatory

Places of war and peace

IRAQ

Jesus Nuñez Villaverde, Francisco Rey Marcos, "Iraq en su laberinto: Apuntes para una Salida", Informe elaborado por el CIP-FUHEM y el IECAH con ocasión de la Conferencia de Donantes para la Reconstrucción de Iraq. (Madrid, octubre de 2003).
(http://www.fuhem.es/cip/Informe%20Conferencia%20Donantes%20Iraq%20CIP-IECAH%20Oct-03.pdf)

ICG Middle East Report Nº 20, *Iraq: Building a New Security Structure*, 23 December 2003
(http://www.crisisweb.org//library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/20_iraq_new_security_structure.pdf)

Paul Rogers, "'War on Terror': a balance sheet", *Open Democracy*, 29 December 2003
(http://www.opendemocracy.net/themes/article-2-1662.jsp)

Human Rights Watch, *Off Target. The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq*, December 2003
(http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/usa1203.pdf)

Jeffrey Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2003
(http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/bounding/bounding.pdf)

Joseph Cirincione, Jessica T. Mathews, George Perkovich and Alexis Orton, "WMD in Iraq. Evidences and Implications", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 2004
(www.ceip.org/files/pdf/Iraq3FullText.pdf)

LIBERIA

International Crisis Group, *Tackling Liberia: The Eye of the Regional Storm*, ICG Africa Report nº62, 30 April 2003
(http://www.crisisweb.org//library/documents/report_archive/A400960_30042003.pdf)

Emira Woods and Carl Patrick Burrowes, "Liberia: Beyond the Troops-No-Troops Debate", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, August 2003
(http://www.fpif.org/papers/liberia2003.html)

Mohamedu F. Jones, "The Peace Agreement: an analysis of some provisions", *The Perspective*, August 29, 2003
(http://www.theperspective.org/peaceagreement.html)

Mariano Aguirre, "No one cares about Liberia", *Reuters AlertNet Viewpoint*, September 2003
(http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/LRaguirreEng.htm)

International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Security Challenges*, ICG Africa Report nº71, 3 November 2003
(http://www.crisisweb.org//library/documents/africa/071_liberia_security_challenges.pdf)

"The Guns are in the Bushes": Continuing Abuses in Liberia, A *Human* Rights Watch Briefing Paper, January 2004

(http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/liberia0104.pdf)

Peace builders

PEACE NOBEL PRIZE 2003

Iranian Children's Rights Society
(http://www.iranianchildren.org/ebadi.html)

Hossein Derakhshan, "Censor this: Iran's web of lies", *Open Democracy*, 22 January 2004
(http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-8-85-1683.jsp)

International Crisis Group, *Iran: Discontent and Disarray*, Middle East Briefing, Brussels, 15 October 2003
(http://www.crisisweb.org//library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/iran_discontent_disarray.pdf)

Human Rights Watch, *Iran – HRW World Report 2003*, 2003
(http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/mideast3.html)

Payvand's Iran News, "The Nobel Peace Prize 2003 - Shirin Ebadi, Iran", 12 October 2003
(http://www.payvand.com/news/03/dec/1065.html)

Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, FIDH assessment of the EU/Iran human rights dialogue, Paris, 1 December 2003
(http://www.fidh.org/asie/rapport/2003/ir0112a.pdf)

P@X Studies

Not so long ago, a main thrust of Western strategy was *Rollback*. Its specific purpose was to defeat "communist" governments in non-Western places. There has also been another thrust, running parallel but with a larger purpose, to roll back government generally – in the words of a top American policymaker, "to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub". A justification for rolling back the state was that it naturally tends to fail; markets, it was said, don't fail. Evangelists for market fundamentalism could smugly point to "state failure" as proof of the need for their dogmatic teachings.

After a couple of decades of shrinking and de-legitimising states and promoting a norm that everything is for sale, these strategies are now known to impose huge costs. In targeted countries in Africa, Latin America and the ex-Soviet Union, hundreds of million have born those costs. But Western countries are also now paying a price as disorder, poverty and resentment in targeted places blows back at them – in migrants, drugs, firearms, criminal mafias and, most dramatically, mass murder and destruction of symbols of Western power. The costs show up in ugly swings in voting patterns, in government curbs on basic rights, in bloated budgets for armed forces and police, and in bailouts of banks whose poor country loans have gone bad.

In a world that has become one place, faraway sites of distress and violence are not so far away from the West after all.

Collapsed, weak, fragile, diminished states – states with adjectives -- are no longer merely the quaint preoccupations of aid agencies and a few probing journalists and academics. Especially since 11 September 2001 they are on the "radar" of military, diplomatic, corporate, academic and NGO researchers and strategy-makers. Attitudes toward the state have also shifted. According to strong versions of the dogma, government was to be shrunk, if not drowned in the bathtub. Now under weaker versions it is to be reinvented, and given roles in "nation building" – though chiefly with powers to keep public order.

Now, from the same quarters that pushed a rollback of the state, come definitions of "failed state" problems in terms of preferred solutions: the imposition from the outside and from above of a new regime, military occupation, and protectorates. This is imperialism with adjectives – like "benign" or "humanitarian".

STATES WITH ADJECTIVES

For researchers and policy activists wishing to promote emancipatory alternatives, this situation looks bad, but it is not altogether hopeless. Policy agendas are not sewn up. Some policy makers, especially in Europe, are open to fresh ideas. A number of issues and hypotheses about weakened states present themselves for renewed research and debate. Among them are opportunities to:

•Shift attention beyond nations like Somalia or Afghanistan toward sub-regions such as the southern Philippines and even urban areas such as in Brazil, where public order is extremely fragile if it exists at all.

•Approach state collapse less as an unfortunate accident and more as an outcome of deliberate policy. This was the case in the ex-Soviet republics, according to Jeffrey Sachs, an architect of "shock therapy" there. A weak state can be analysed as something predatory leaders perpetuate because it is useful to them, as in sub-Saharan Africa, where disorder has been "instrumentalized" by politicians and warlords.

•Study global systems of rules that promote conditions for state collapse, such as bank secrecy, corporate freedoms to bribe, the "war on drugs" and incoherent economic systems that redistribute wealth from poor to rich.

•Study domestic arrangements that permit greater transparency about the use and allocation of public and private resources (such state investment as across regions and ethnic groupings) and that restrain those peddling "solutions" that offer little genuine democracy but unleash polarizing trends.

•Finally, it may help our understanding of weak states and what can be done about them to look North as well as South and East. Silvio Berlusconi is no Mobutu, but a comparison of their respective effects on public institutions in Italy and the Congo might shed light on the processes of state failure.

David Sogge
(Transnational Institute, Amsterdam)

NEP's Attic

Book review

Pureza, José Manuel,
Ferrandíz, Francisco (2003) (orgs.),
Fogo sobre os media: informação, conhecimento e crítica em conflitos armados. Coimbra: Quarteto Editora.

Journalism or independent, alternative and committed information, and its potential role in the transformation of conflicts and mentalities, assumes an added importance nowadays. This is mainly so after the Second Gulf War and, in particular, after the appearance of the so-called *embedded journalists* during this war.

If, on the one hand, new technologies facilitate and stimulate media's work, on the other hand, they encourage the maintenance and supremacy of a show oriented society, of the "see to believe" culture, of thought and information homogenisation. Presently around 70% of international information comes from three news agencies: Associated Press, Reuters and France Press (Aldás, 2002). This prevailing information formats and influences public opinion and has the capacity and power to perpetuate (or not) the armed conflicts under coverage.

It was precisely to analyse the difficult relation between media and armed conflicts that HumanitarianNet [1] organised two international seminars in April 2001 (Amsterdam) and April 2002 (Coimbra). *Fogo sobre os media: informação, conhecimento e crítica em conflitos armados* [*Media under Fire: information, knowledge and critic in armed conflicts*] is the product of those two seminars, which gathered journalists, activists and academics in a debate with the main purpose of critically analysing principles, instruments and objectives of the dominant news industry and the need for alternatives.

The book is divided in two parts. In a first part, composed of six chapters, and after an introduction by the book's coordinators, José Manuel Pureza (University of Coimbra) and Francisco Ferrándiz (University of Deusto, Bilbao), there is an analysis of the debates that shape the discourses on the relation between media and armed conflicts. These are the debate between knowledge and information, the debate between the right to information and the manipulation of that information, and the debate between war journalism and peace journalism.

Within the first debate, the chapters by Mariano Aguirre and Magnus Oberg and Margareta Sollenberg emphasise the need to produce a systematic knowledge on the so-called 'new wars' as the only way to overcome the simplistic dichotomy that opposes the "narrative of chaos" to the "humanitarian narrative".

The second debate, on the right to information and the manipulation of that information, is unfolded and analysed by Edouard Markiewicz, Jonathan Steele e Pedro Caldeira Rodrigues. Markiewicz evidences the need for people living in conflict areas to have access to reliable information, which might be an important survival tool in vulnerable situations. For Jonathan Steele, emotion is needed to *report with judgement*, to prevent journalistic cynicism. However, the emotion he speaks about is different from media sensationalism; it's an emotion rooted on, or caused by, injustice. Finally, Pedro Caldeira Rodrigues underlines the constant silencing of balanced opinions and voices that cry for peace and the preference for a particular way of 'doing journalism' in the 'editorial rooms' invisible war', where simplification and manichaeism are preferred, in a game of winners and loosers.

NEP's Attic

The third and last debate confronts war journalism and journalism for peace (*peaceful journalism* [2]). The distinction between these two types or ways of doing journalism is based on the decisions made by media in situations of armed conflicts, which inevitably tend to contribute to war or peace. With regards to this, Ladislas Bizimana emphasises that modern media, in armed conflict situations, often amplify the sound of weapons instead of silencing it, encourage and perpetuate violence instead of producing information devoted to dialogue strengthening, to understanding and to a positive transformation of antagonisms. This means that dominant media produce/choose war journalism (that stimulates conflicts by offering a partial look and reflecting only one side of the story) in detriment of peace journalism. In Pedro Caldeira Rodrigues' opinion, they choose distance in detriment of compromise.

The second part of this book underlines the distinct ambivalences (dealing with the use of media, the representation of victims and conflict prevention) produced by the intersection of these three debates within specific conflict situations. In the last four chapters, there are critical reports on the use of Internet during NATO's intervention in Kosovo (in a chapter by Robert Hudson), on the victimisation policies used by media and their purposes (analysed by Stephen Ryan in the case of Northern Ireland), on the relation between media and the diffuse character of conflict prevention (in the case of Colombia, developed by Manuel Salamanca) and, finally, Jordi Raich criticises the lack of political will and commitment towards conflict prevention in Africa, where the "conflict promotion" strategy of the superpowers during the Cold War was replaced, after September 11th 2001, by the strategy of "conflict oblivion".

The information produced by the dominant media is full of a culture of violence. After all, conflicts and wars (live wars) are also a product that sells. Polemics and violence sell. Dialogue and peace, for the time being, do not.

Tatiana Moura - Peace Studies Group

[1] Network created in 1996 with the aim to promote research and education projects in five areas: Human Rights; Poverty and Development; Humanitarian Assistance; Peace and Conflict Studies and Migration, Diversity and Identities. The network incorporates 87 universities, 6 research centres and 9 international organisations in 31 European countries.

[2] In www.transcend.org/pjmanual, 7/1/2004.

Bibliography

Aldás, Eloísa Nos (2002) (org.), *Medios periodísticos, cooperación y acción humanitária: relaciones imposibles?.* Barcelona: Icaria Editorial.

McGoldrick, Annabel and Lynch, Jake (2000), *Peace Journalism: how to do it?*, in www.transcend.org/pjmanual, October.

NEP's Attic

PEACE STUDIES GROUP (NEP) AGENDA

NEP's Research Projects

"Prevention of Armed Conflicts, Development Co-operation and Fair Integration in the International System" (ongoing project, financed by the Portuguese Cooperation Agency)

Objectives: to analyse the role that development co-operation can play to prevent armed conflicts, focusing on its role fostering favourable internal conditions and policies, such as good governance, democratic institutions, a strong civil society and economic and social reforms; to formulate a critical and comprehensive framework for the integration of fragile States into the international political and economic system as a means to prevent future armed conflicts.

Publications

Fogo sobre os Media - Informação, conhecimento e crítica em conflitos armados
Coimbra: Quarteto Editora (October 2003)
José Manuel Pureza, Francisco Ferrándiz (orgs.)
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/publicacoes010en.php)

La protección internacional de los derechos humanos en los albores del siglo XXI
Bilbao: HumanitarianNet (December 2003)
Felipe Gómez Isa, José Manuel Pureza
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/publicacoes009en.php)

Before Emergency: Conflict Prevention and the Media
Bilbao: HumanitarianNet (December 2003)
Mariano Aguirre, Francisco Ferrándiz, José Manuel Pureza
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/publicacoes008en.php)

Highlights

VIII Luso-Afro-Brazilian Congress of Social Sciences – The Social Question in the New Millenium (Centre for Social Studies – Coimbra)
Coimbra, September 16th-18th, 2004 – deadline for submissions: March 31st
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/lab2004/english.html)

NEP's Activities

June 24 to July 24, 2003
Tatiana Moura (NEP) attended the Columbia University's course on "Human Rights and Peace Education in Brazil", Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/documentos/rio.pdf)

July 29-31, 2003
"Women and peace building", Arrabida Course organised by the Peace Studies Group, Arrábida (Portugal).
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/documentos/arrabida.pdf)

September 1-15, 2003
Mónica Rafael (NEP) and Mabel González (Peace Research Centre), together with the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), were in Luanda (Angola) doing a short-term research on civil society's media needs and conducting a training seminar for journalists and NGO's officials on "Angola. Time for peace and reconstruction".

November 29, 2003
Mónica Rafael and Tatiana Moura (NEP) presented the case of East Timor and an analysis of women's participation in post-war reconstruction processes in the course "Generar paz, reconstruir sociedades - un curso de aproximación a la rehabilitación posbelica", organised by the Basque NGO UNESCO Etxea, Bilbao (Spain).

January 21, 2004
Peace Studies Group **Seminar on "Development Co-operation and Conflict Prevention"**, with presentations by Patrícia Magalhães Ferreira (Institute for Strategic and International Studies) and Sérgio Guimarães (Portuguese Co-operation Agency), CES, Coimbra.
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/documentos/seminario.pdf)